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NEWS AND NOTES

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

TENTH ANNUAL MEETING

The National Council of Teachers of English will celebrate its tenth birthday at the Annual Meeting in the Auditorium Hotel, Chicago, November 25-27. One of the features will be a gathering of charter members. It is especially important that each affiliated association send accredited representatives to the meeting of the Board of Directors Thanksgiving afternoon. The management of the Council is now really in the hands of these directors elected by the affiliated associations. This year there is an unusual amount of important business to come before them. At the last annual meeting the Board of Directors passed a resolution asking all committees to finish their work and if possible present final reports this year. Besides the usual general session and two conferences there will be two section meetings each for college men and school people. The rich program and the splendid fellowship will well repay the effort and expense of attendance.

Notice is hereby given that at the annual business meeting on Friday, November 26, the following amendment to the constitution will be offered: "To amend Article V, paragraph 3, by substituting \$3 for \$2." This is to raise the annual dues of the Council, an action necessary because of the greatly increased cost of supplies and service.

SPEECH WEEK

National Speech Week will again be celebrated, November 1-8. The initiative for this revival comes not so much from the National Council or its speech committee as from those who, having found it profitable, wish to repeat, and those who, having neglected the earlier opportunity, want a second chance. Among new materials available is "The Conspiracy," in this issue of the *Journal*, and reprinted at 10 cents a copy. Those who would have a successful week should begin at once—at least upon their fellow-teachers.

The Speech Committee of the National Council is fortunate in its new chairman, Mr. T. W. Gosling, of the state department of education, Madison, Wisconsin. Miss Claudia Crumpton, of Detroit, remains the secretary of the committee.

COMMITTEE ON PLAYS

The National Council Committee on Plays is being completely reorganized. Mr. Clarence Stratton, of Central High School, St. Louis, has been made chairman and is gathering a small group of able, enthusiastic workers.

THE ASSOCIATIONS

PUGET SOUND ENGLISH MASTERS

The Puget Sound English Masters' Club met Saturday afternoon, May 29, at the University of Washington. Attention was centered upon problems connected with the revision of the state high-school course in English. Ladies were invited to attend and to participate in the discussions. The program was as follows: (1) "What Literature Shall the Boys and Girls of Washington Study?" R. M. Garrett, University of Washington; (2) Discussion of principles, aims, plans, etc., for teaching of English as set forth in the Report of the Committee of Thirty, T. M. Drotning, Franklin High School, and Geo. B. Cole, Lincoln High School; (3) Discussion of principles laid down by the Inland Empire Council of Teachers of English for the study of high-school literature.

THE DETROIT HIVE

With its membership of 269 last winter the Detroit English Club was probably the largest purely local organization of this character. They held ten meetings and heard several notable addresses. This year the leaders are planning even greater things. They think that a membership of 500 is within the possibilities. They are to have fortnightly meetings, one each month devoted to amateur dramatics (plays, not talk about them) and the other to lectures by prominent speakers. To celebrate the Pilgrim Tercentenary at Thanksgiving they hope to have a community pageant. Besides dramatics their main interest will be speech improvement. Speech week and discussion contests for high-school and intermediate pupils will arouse interest among the children.

The club is elaborately organized with committees and the following officers: president, C. C. Certain, Cass Technical High School; vice-president, Miss Clara Beverly, supervisor of English in the grades; secretary, Miss Alice Marsh, Nordstrum High School; treasurer, Miss Mary Brugger, Breitmeyer School; chairman of the Executive Committee, Miss Claudia Crumpton, Northwestern High School.

THE ENGLISH CONFERENCE AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

A series of papers of great interest and value were presented at the spring conference of secondary schools with the University of Chicago. Howard C. Hill, of the University of Chicago High School, explained in detail how he conducts a course in which English and social science are combined. Miss Genevieve Dennison outlined an elaborate thrift campaign, which she felt assured had borne fruit both in English and in a sense of values. Progress in an experiment with a control test in silent reading was reported by Miss Myrtle Starbird, of the Harrison Technical High School, Chicago. The purpose was to determine the extent to which formal training in silent reading develops comprehension and speed. The class use of a school newspaper was the topic treated by Miss Margaret M. Sleezer of the Nicholas Senn High School, also in Chicago. A similar theme, experiments in the use of magazines, was handled by Miss Mabel Parker, of the Hyde Park High School. The series was completed by Miss Elizabeth Grahame, who spoke of the Springfield plan of supplementary work. This involves much voluntary activity on the part of the pupils but results in enrichment of the course and greater satisfaction to both teachers and pupils. Professor Franklin K. Snyder followed with an address on "Literature in the High School."

BOSTON RESOLUTIONS

The Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English in Boston last November had a section devoted to extension teaching. Under the leadership of Mr. Percy W. Long of the Massachusetts Board of Education that group continued to hold conferences during the winter. At their last meeting they adopted the following statement of principles:

1. *Resolved*, That the Conference indorses the separation of "practical" and "literary" English in unit periods of instruction, variable in length according to the nature of each unit, but rarely of less than one month and rarely of more than two months. These periods should each embrace training in reading and writing, but should vary in purpose and emphasis, one aiming at self-expression and the other at appreciation. The same teacher should have charge of both types of instruction.

2. *Resolved*, That the comprehensive examination represents the more desirable standard of preparation, but one which, owing to changing types of students, it is increasingly difficult to meet.

3. *Resolved*, That no school comes to highest efficiency without co-operation of departments; that such co-operation is best obtained by a general scheme (of the kind in use in the Brockton High School) prepared by the individual departments under supervision of the principal; and that co-operation of the English and modern language departments in standardizing translation is especially advocated.

4. *Resolved*, That in the list of study books set by the College Entrance Board there should be introduced in the group of orations some representative of public speech more recent than any now listed.

5. *Resolved*, That college entrance requirements in English should estimate considerations of thought, structure, and diction as in no way secondary to the elements of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and idiom.

THE PERIODICALS

A TEACHER'S SELF-RATING SCALE

Professor H. O. Rugg, of the Lincoln School of Teachers College, has adapted certain of the United States Army tests for the use of teachers in self-rating. In the account of it which he gives in the *Elementary School Journal* for May, 1920, he points out that the scale is used for making teachers critical of their work and also for providing more definite means of judging teachers' efficiency. The present efficiency ratings are known to be unreliable. In order to obtain a basis for sound judgment the process of judging must be standardized. This the author has attempted to do by providing a rating scale. Part I is made up of five outlines, on skill in teaching, team work, personal and social qualities, and the like. Part II provides for rating by direct comparison. Teachers of different degrees of merit are selected as norms and the individual to be rated is compared with these. Professor Rugg claims for the scale a very considerable degree of reliability. In his experience in working with the army rating scale he found that a probable error of not more than ten or fifteen points in a hundred was to be expected. If three independent ratings are made the amount of error can be very materially reduced.

MOTION PICTURES AND THE TEACHING OF THE DRAMA

The new magazine called *Visual Education* seems likely to prove of wide general interest. Teachers of English might well read the article on "Motion Pictures and the Teaching of the Drama" in the May number, by Professor Donald C. Stewart, Princeton University. The writer contends that our educational institutions are reactionary as far

as true dramatic art is concerned. The teaching of drama as an art was never or rarely attempted until the beginning of the twentieth century. Courses in plays were at best merely courses in literature or literary history. There are now, however, numerous courses in play-writing or in the art of production, and in these motion pictures can be used to good advantage. No doubt we shall soon have a body of excellent films for the purpose.

DRILL AND THE PROJECT METHOD

The most popular idea in education at this time is undoubtedly that which goes by the name of the project method. One of the most significant articles is that by Mr. S. A. Courtis on "How to Provide for the Development of Fundamental Skills by Means of the Project Method." Taking the point of view of a school superintendent, the writer points out that the question of attaining the results called for by the courses of study is one which the administrative officer cannot ignore; hence, when he hears of the project method, although it appeals to his common sense, he is obliged to raise the question as to whether it will get results. Mr. Courtis thinks there is no doubt that it will. The principle which he invokes is that "if knowledge or skill is of such a character that undesirable results follow directly from failure, purposeful activity may be depended upon to build up slowly by trial-and-error methods correct habits and adequate degrees of skill; but if the operation of the habit or skill is obscure, so that cause and effect may not be easily and effectively traced, mere activity except by chance will not produce the desired results." Measurement has made possible complete individual adjustment in group drills. If, now, whole-heartedness of effort can be added to repetition, the skills sought for in school work can certainly be obtained. The writer looks forward to the time when fundamental skills will be attained in school through the operation of self-selected projects arranged in series.

THE SITUATION AND THE REMEDY

The current enthusiasm for the schools as the bulwark of orderly democracy leads E. A. Cross to tell in the *Yale Review* for July "The Truth about Teachers." Federal and state reports show that two-sevenths of the teachers are new every year, that the average experience of those in service is less than three years, that the average age is but twenty-four, and the average salary but six hundred dollars. (The salaries for 1920-21 are somewhat better, no doubt.) This means

that the large majority of teachers are even younger, less experienced, and more poorly paid than the average. Most of them have had only a high-school course and very many have had less. One school in sixteen is vacant for lack of a teacher and of the others one in ten has a teacher who cannot pass the test for even the lowest grade of certificate. The situation is growing constantly worse. On the other hand, to assure the effectiveness of our schools we need an adequate force of teachers trained in practical sociology and applied psychology, possessed also of a thorough knowledge of the branches they teach, and permanently enlisted in the profession. Successful women teachers should be encouraged to continue their work after marriage. Finally he offers this program: (1) salaries commensurate with the remuneration of other professions, (2) disqualification of the untrained and the unsuccessful, and (3) a national plan for teacher-training and certification similar to that of France.

INNOVATIONS IN SUBJECT-MATTER

The New England Association's *English Leaflet* for June contains an article by Laura V. Edwards, of Cleveland, Ohio, on "Oral Composition, a Course in Ethics for High-School Seniors." Miss Edwards insists that pupils like these ethical discussions and recommend that the time allowance of three weeks be materially increased. She gives a three-page outline of the topics used and a half-page bibliography of books which have proved helpful in the work.

The editor of the *Leaflet*, Samuel Thurber, follows with the Newton Technical High School plan to prevent teachers from growing stale. Every teacher must try her hand sooner or later with pupils of all years. He thinks that occasional assignments in history, Latin, or French may be helpful. Moreover, it is an unwritten law in his school that every instructor shall during each school year teach at least one book she has never taught before. School-entertainment funds make possible the purchase of many sets for this purpose. *America at Work*, by Joseph Husband; *Short Stories of the New America*, selected by Mary Laselle; and *Heroes of Every Day Life*, selected by Fannie E. Coe, are especially recommended.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

The *Record* of the University of North Carolina for February, 1920, is devoted to an account of the work of the graduate school. Address, the University at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.—*Bulletin No. 11*, Series

of 1920, Bureau of Education, presents statistics of the state school systems for 1917-18, compiled by H. R. Bonner.—The Parent-Teacher Association of the Ethical Culture School, New York City, issues an attractive illustrated account of its activities. Price, twenty-five cents a copy.—The Bureau of Education issues as Health Department Series No. 6 an illustrated pamphlet called *Further Steps in Teaching Health*.—The physical conditions of the elementary public schools of Baltimore are described in an elaborate report published by the Allied Associations of Public School Teachers of that city.—The Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company issues a revised edition of Whipple's "Business Letter Writing."—The *Wisconsin Memorial Day Annual* for 1920, compiled by Mr. O. S. Rice, supervisor of school libraries, and issued by C. P. Cary, state superintendent, contains much fresh material and will prove of real value.—The Council of the Allied Association of Public School Teachers of Baltimore issues as *Bulletin* No. 8 a study of maxima in public-school work, under the editorial direction of Mr. W. R. Maltbie.—The United Mine Workers of America have published the case of the bituminous coal-mine workers as presented to the President's Coal Commission.—A good example of efforts for local advancement is embodied in a pamphlet entitled *A Greater Wabash Valley Empire*, prepared by the Greater Terre Haute Club, Terre Haute, Indiana.—*Bulletin* No. 65 of the Eastern Illinois State Normal School contains a paper on "New Poetry in the Composition Class," by Earle R. K. Daniels, of that school.—Recent bulletins of the Bureau of Education are as follows: *The Accredited Secondary Schools of the North Central Association*, *Teaching English to the Foreign Born*, *The Problem of Mathematics in Secondary Education*, *Class Extension Work in the Universities and Colleges of the United States*, *Motion Pictures and Motion-Picture Equipment*, *Educational Institutions Equipped with Motion-Picture Projection Machines*, *Private High Schools and Academies, 1917-19*, *The Child and the Kindergarten*, *List of References on Consolidation of Schools*, *List of References on Education for Citizenship*, *Educational Directory, 1919-20*, Part VII, *Miscellaneous Educational Organizations*.